

**REMARKS**

The Application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action dated September 9, 2005. Applicants gratefully acknowledge the Examiner's statements that claims 1, 17 and 24-27 contain allowable subject matter. Claims 1, 2, 17, 18, 24 and 25 have been amended. Claims 29-39 have been newly added. No new matter has been included. Applicants reserve the right to pursue the original claims and other claims in this and in other applications. Claims 1, 2, 17-27 and 29-39 are now pending in the application.

Claim 2 stands objected to based on certain informalities. Applicants have amended claim 2 to address the concerns raised in the Office Action. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the objection be withdrawn.

Claims 1, 2 and 17-27 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. Claims 1, 2, 17, 18, 24 and 25 have been amended. The concerns raised in the Office Action have been addressed by the amendments to claims 1, 2, 17, 18, 24 and 25. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection be withdrawn and the claims allowed.

Claims 2 and 17-23 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Burt (U.S. Patent No. 5,063,603) in view of Kuwano (U.S. Application No. 2002/0015094). Claims 22-23 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Burt, Kuwano and Coffin et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,991,429). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejections and request reconsideration.

Applicants have amended claims 2 and 17 to include allowable subject matter, as described in the Office Action. (Office Action at 12). As stated in the Office

Action, the cited references do not disclose, teach, or suggest an image comparison apparatus or method that acquires images prior to the pressing of a check start button, and then acquires at least another image after the pressing of said check start button. Nor do the cited references disclose, teach or suggest comparing at least one of the images acquired after the pressing of the check start button with at least one registration image to determine if there is a match and then, if no match exists, comparing at least one registration image to at least one image acquired before the pressing of the check start button.

Therefore, at least for the reasons set forth above, claims 2 and 17 are allowable. Claims 18-24 depend from claim 2 and thus, are allowable along with claim 2. Claims 25-27 depend from claim 17 and thus, are allowable along with claim 17. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection be withdrawn and the claims allowed.

In addition, newly added claims 29-39 recite similar limitations as those described above. Accordingly, Applicants believe that claims 29-39 are allowable for at least the reasons set forth above and on their own merits.

In view of the above, each of the presently pending claims in this application is believed to be in immediate condition for allowance. Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw the outstanding rejections and to pass this application to issue.

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Respectfully submitted,

By 

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